

MEMORANDUM

TO: GCGPC, SAPA, SCGC, LMCGPC and MIA guards

FR: Fred Feeney, Chief Judge

DT: January 25, 2018

RE: Social Media and Communication With Judges

I hope everyone is off to a great start. We are all well aware that weather issues have caused school closings and have significantly impacted your rehearsal schedules. Don't worry. Everyone in your area is probably in the same boat and the judges are well aware of these issues.

Over the last couple of years there have been significant changes in the WGI Code of Conduct and Ethics that applies to judges. We cover this in all of our seminars and in fact covered it extensively in a webinar held just a couple of weeks ago. This information starts on page 4 of the judges manual. As a local association we generally adopt and abide by all of these guidelines.

One of the most important areas of emphasis for the past couple of years has been the use of social media. The guidelines for using personal social media include:

- No communication is allowed privately or publicly via email, text or on any social media streams or with any director, instructor, judge or performer about any competitive aspect of a participating group. This type of communication is strictly prohibited.
- WGI staff and judges should never comment on an individual group's anticipated or actual performance or anything of a competitive nature, however positive. Such postings create openings for questions from anyone reading the post. What seems like an innocent comment can be easily misconstrued.
- WGI staff and judges should change personal settings on Facebook to allow review and approval of any post visible to the public. Use caution on "liking" any post regarding any individual group or WGI.
- WGI staff and judges are prohibited from promoting any participating group with which they are affiliated so not to present the appearance of intended influence.
- WGI staff and judges should refrain from posting or liking any pictures or comments that imply favoritism towards any one group, instructor, circuit or region.

- WGI staff and judges should use caution in posting or “tagging” photos or videos of any color guard on your personal social media streams.

It is important to remember that anything posted on the Internet is permanent. If misinterpreted or open to misinterpretation, such postings can do incalculable damage to the reputation of individuals, organizations and WGI.

You will note that the judges are given specific instructions that they are not to communicate with any of you about any competitive aspect of any performing or participating group. This includes even talking about seeing someone at the contest. We try to enforce this from the perspective of the judges but we need your help. While it is prohibited for the judges to communicate with you, it is difficult if you are reaching out and communicating with them. Through the years judges have been instructed that they should not respond to any text, emails, phone calls or Facebook messages. In fact, they have been instructed to let me know if they hear from any instructor either before during or after the contest. Here is where we need your help. It is simply inappropriate for you to try to reach out to any judge to communicate in any way about the contest, your group or even color guards in general. You therefore should not send any messages to anyone you know is on the judging panel and likewise should not expect a response from them.

We have had this issue come up in the past and it has resulted in some tense moments. The Circuit Administrations for each of the circuits we service are well aware of these guidelines and the need to enforce them.

Thanks and have a great 2018! Please let me know if you have any questions.

Fred

End of memo.
FBFII/trl